THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yoga and herbal medicine have been found to be helpful in staying fit for the soldiers at high altitude.

(b) and (c) A number of studies conducted by scientific team of Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS) have shown that Composite Indian Herbal Preparations (CHIPs) are beneficial in the extreme altitude, cold area or in low intensity conflict situations. In order to evaluate acceptability and subjective efficacy of CHIP-II in extreme altitudes *i.e.* beyond about 5000 m, a large-scale trial on troops operative at these heights is in progress.

Purchase of bullet proof jackets for soldiers

†766. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed any deal for the procurement of bullet proof jackets for soldiers during last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any tender has been invited presently for procurement of bullet proof jackets for the soldiers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the last two years, a Contract for procurement of 6000 Nos. Bullet Proof Jackets (BPJs) was concluded on 21.3.2001 with M/s Tata Advanced Materials Ltd., Bangalore. Further orders for supply of additional 16,000 Nos. Bullet Proof Jackets were placed on the aforesaid firm under option clause, on the same rates/terms and conditions *vide* Addendum No. 1 dated 21.3.2001 (for quantity 1000 BPJs) and Addendum No. 2 dated 26.11.2001 (for quantity 15000 BPJs).

2. A request for Technical and Commercial Proposals for Lightweight Bullet Proof Jackets was issued on 23.1.2002 to 96 vendors (81 Foreign and 15 Indian). A brief notice in this regard was put on Ministry of Defence Web Site and "Request for Proposal" was issued to 8 more Vendors, subsequently, on their request. In all 28 vendors responded to the "Request for Proposal".TheirTechnical proposals where opened on 15.3.2002 by a Price Negotiation Committee.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

3. A Committee under the Chairmanship of Deputy Master General of Ordnance was constituted to evaluate the Technical Proposal of the Vendors. The Committee after evaluating the Technical proposal has submitted its report to the Ministry of Defence on 3.7.2002.

Shifting of Air Force Engineering College, Kanpur

767. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minister of Defence had laid the foundation stone in 1977 for setting up the Air Force Engineering College at Kanpur after taking into consideration its proximity with the Base Repair Depots. Equipment Depot and other maintenance facilities for supporting the training;

(b) if so, whether there is a proposal to shift this College to some other location: and

(c) if so, the reasons for shifting of the location and the delay to accord Government approval for the setting up of this College at Kanpur?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The foundation stone was laid by the then Minister for Defence in 1997 and not in 1977.

(b) and (c) The case is being reviewed at-present. A decision will be taken in the matter after taking into account all the relevant factors, keeping in view the national interest. However, it is not possible to lay down any time limit for this purpose.

Postponement of elections of Cantonment Boards due to proposed amendment in the Act

768. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that elections to the 62 Cantonment Boards of the country have been postponed in order to carry out amendments in the Cantonment Board Act;

(b) if so, the details of the amendments proposed and by when the amending Bill is likely to be introduced in Parliament;

(c) what is the sanctity of withholding elections of Cantonment Boards without amending the relevant law which is quite a lengthy process; and